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STATUS OF PREPARATION OF PUBLICATIONS, STUDIES AND DOCUMENTS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE

Contribution from the Catholic Human Rights Committee for the World Conference on Human Rights

The attention of the Preparatory Committee is drawn to the attached statement, entitled "Recommendation on the World Conference on Human Rights: On Development and Human Rights in Asia and the Pacific".

RECOMMENDATION ON THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

On Development and Human Rights in Asia and the Pacific

Asia and the Pacific is a world region that has experienced one of the most dramatic social, cultural and political changes in the 20th century. It is a region with many different peoples, cultures and religions, and, historically, with little regional communications until very recently. In addition, it is also the only World Region where no regional human rights treaties exist yet. It is also a region battered with severe violations of human rights from numerous wars, state-emergency measures, internal security controls, developmental authoritarianism, extra-judicial executions, involuntary disappearances, forced labour, massive migration of labour, forced prostitution, over-urbanization, to name a few.

Development, in its economic sense only, has been the goal of society for decades, giving little room for those minorities who disagreed. The value of human development was replaced with the merit of increased GNP, the degree of competition and efficiency of labour. As material growth has became the ideal, the exploitation of natural and human resources was justified under the objective of "national development". This objective in turn justified concentration of, or unequal distribution of wealth and thus various social injustice.

For the sake of a rapid development, shrewd nationalism was mobilized and then joined with remaining feudal ideologies, or discriminatory values linked with sex, age, race, family and other social status. It was a process of forming a social hierarchy that serves as a basis of a intensive labour-mobilizing, a pattern strikingly similar in many rapidly developing or developed countries.

Nationalistic authoritarian states in Asia and the Pacific employed 'accelerated development' plan by making a full use of the Cold War situation. Such a choice of path inevitably had to accelerate the disintegration of traditional social units as well as an uncontrolled urbanization. Targeting for possible source of capital, technology and finally the market, those countries did not have other choices but to accept the world division of production. That choice was accompanied with an importation of the fateful side-effects of the periphery economy such as pollution, environmental instability, profit-and-consumption-oriented culture, massive exploitation of young unskilled workers, and so forth.

Expansion of military was seen in many countries in the region, which was also incorporated into the economic structure - defense industries based on heavy and electronic industries. Tension from a possibility of war and military exercises were

often deliberately aroused when the developmental strategy was seriously challenged.

The accelerated development model, however, was not successful in that it could not narrow the gap between the developed and the developing countries. Rather, trades and division of production within this region have taken more and more a structured form with a few countries at the center and the others in the periphery permanently. A "successful" economy like the South Korea's has also come to a serious structural as well as cultural crisis, costing the whole society a prolonged period of recovery from the past wounds.

As if to manifest its worst effect, the continued unequal development in this region has also stimulated massive migration of labour from the poorest countries, plunging hundreds of thousands of young people into semi-slavery - not to mention further another symptom, sex-tourism and trafficking of children.

In most countries of the region, the formation of cheap labour through massive displacement of rural population and consequent deterioration of self-sustaining agricultural economy proceeded without consent of rural communities. Instead, land has often become a source of profitable investment due to developmental inflation phenomenon, deepening the gap between the poor and the rich.

Industrial workers are also subordinated by deprivation of their basic rights. Co-determination is considered as undesirable or dangerous idea in front of national development. Such an objective-oriented exploitation of workers naturally resulted in social contempt or bias against workers, their cultural alienation, massive industrial accidents and diseases.

Women and children among other minorities have become the most victimized social groups in nationalistic authoritarian situation, due to the close link between authoritarianism and discriminatory customs of the past. In addition, what many NICs in Asia like south Korea have shown is that military rule especially develops a distinctively biased attitude towards women and the weak, while fostering as well an inclination to violence instead of conversation. Hasty identification of 'enemy' or 'dangerous elements' to the development strategy and a culture of suspicion and hatred become an integral part of society. Though never clearly conveyed to other countries, the cost of recovery from such a total damage, as in south Korea, far exceeds the gains of its 'economic' miracle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From these observations and in this important occasion in the history of the UN, I would like to recommend the following:

In spite of the numerous codification of human rights, the principle of universality, indivisibility, and inter-dependency of human rights and basic freedoms should be

strongly advocated and duly reconfirmed even in the Asian context. There is no doubt that we should still go further so as to overcome the present difficulties and ineffectiveness of the UN instruments.

As in the Declaration on the Right to Development, adopted by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 41/128 of 4 December 1986, we understand that a genuine development should be a social progress oriented towards human development. For this goal, today's world demands more and more a new paradigm of progress. Today's world also challenges us to reconsider upon our present model of civilization; i.e. mass production, mass consumption and mass dumping civilization, which has proven itself so destructive to mankind. Thus, we strongly uphold the concept of "sustainable development" in the sense of a new model of "human rights compatible development".

However, we find that the prevailing development model in Asia and the Pacific is still a national development with accelerated industrialization. We also identify that pursuing this model the nation-state itself has become the most powerful and over-developed actor as well as the cause of many human rights violations. On behalf of all the past victims and in the hope of no such repetition in the future, I claim that this development model and the role of the state should be checked and changed. For how to do it, I propose the principle of "Less State and More Civilian Participation", or "Co-Determination in All Sectors of Society"

A genuinely human development, as a new paradigm, requires full recognition and promotion of civil-political rights as well as economic-social-cultural rights.
In this respect:
(1) Development should also be a peace-oriented development, or a true progress of mankind in other words. Therefore, it concretely requires, especially in Asia, an immediate halt of military competition, especially among the powerful nations. The continued military build-up must be immediately replaced by genuine peace treaties (especially in the North-East Asia) guided by self-determination and non-intervention principles.
(2) In order to check ruthless development drives of nation-states, it is essential to set up a regional structure on human rights and development with full participation of non-governmental institutions in Asia and the Pacific. The governments in the region should agree at least to take the duty of proper support and cooperation. Thank you.

Finally, I propose from another perspective to challenge the commonly upheld belief that a new peaceful world order can be achieved through traditional ways. Given the inadequate function of the UN in many international disputes, including the prolonged tragedy in former Yugoslavia, widening gap between the North and the South and questionable decisions of areas of the UN's military intervention, let me now boldly ask the international community if traditional nation-states, too often preoccupied in their own national interests, can still be the effective and singularly justified main actors for peace building? Or have we come to a historical time to devise or complement a new actor into the working field of true peace? Again, critical of their

past plays, I would like to suggest "Less State and More Civilian Participation", or "Democratic Co-Determination in International Affairs" as the alternative guiding principle towards effective peace-building actions of international community. This is a reform of ideas, necessary if we really wish to bring forward a change. Reminded of the vast flow of profit in the arms trade and its integral role in the past national development and military regimes, I argue for the UN that now reforms are necessary, but before that should come the new principles of world order.

Looking forward the year of 1995 as the rebirth year of the UN, governments, NGOs and other international actors should join their efforts to seriously study on the new principles of a just world order. It can be done through a special working group in preparation of the General Assembly of the UN in 1995 by (1) reviewing comprehensively the faults of the past development process, (2) critically analyzing the relationship between accelerated development, role of the state, and human rights violations, (3) designing new and bold principles and a new model of development in compliance with the existing human rights instruments of the UN. Thank you.